

## A Holy Calling

*"... Suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God, who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace" (2 Tim. 1:8f).*

Here Paul writes of our calling as a *"holy calling"*. Elsewhere it is called a *"high calling"* and a *"heavenly"* one (Phil. 3:14; Heb. 3:1). God has *"called us out of darkness into his marvelous light"* (1 Pet. 2:9). Darkness and blindness are equals and spiritually equate ignorance, sometimes *"self-imposed"*. Light stands for sight, perception, and understanding. Because we are called from darkness to light, God's holy calling is a call to understand the right ways of God.

The Ephesians were implored to *"walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called in all lowliness and meekness and longsuffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"* (Eph. 4:1). The exhortation to a worthy walk is a plea that brethren have the proper spirit and attitude toward all our brethren. None walk worthy of a holy calling who bite and devour brethren; whose behavior is no different as a Christian than it was before he became one. Paul said that once we *"lived in malice and envy ... that we were hateful, hating one another"* (Titus 3:3). When one has purged his heart from such sinful attitudes and spirit, he has cleansed himself from the defilement of the spirit.

The word *"church"* is a transliteration of the Greek word *ekklesia*, *"the called out"*. In the text from 2 Timothy 1:8 God is said to have saved us and called us with a holy calling. The church is a body of people who has been called to a holy purpose. This agrees with Peter who wrote, *"Like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living; because it is written, ye shall be holy, for I am holy"* (1 Pet. 1:5f). The Corinthians were *"called to be saints"* (1 Cor. 1:1). In his second letter to that church Paul reminded them there was no communion between light and darkness; no concord between Christ and Belial; no fellowship between righteousness and iniquity. Therefore they were urged, *"Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord. And touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you and will be to you a Father and ye shall be to me sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty"* (2 Cor. 6:14-18). Having such promises, God children are to cleanse themselves from all *"defilements of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"* (2 Cor. 7:1). The church is to be presented to Christ, holy and without blemish for our calling is a holy calling.

God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, a calling which demands purity in heart and body. But despite the fact that a transformed life results from accepting God's call, we are reminded that that holy body and spirit is the result of salvation, not the cause of it. Our salvation is from God's own purpose and grace. God willed before the world began, that such a people might exist (we are called in one body, 1 Pet. 3:15) but for such a holy body to be, the redeeming, cleansing, sanctifying blood of our Savior was necessary. Such is said to be the result of the applied blood of Christ for we are cleansed and loosed from our sins by His blood (1 Jn. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). That sparkling, glistening yonder company of uncountable folks standing before God's throne arrayed in white robes are those who *"came out of the great tribulation and they washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb"* (Rev. 7:9, 14).

God has saved us! Such is the joyous song of sinners who have flee to Jesus for refuge; who overcome the evil one because *"of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony and because they loved not their life unto death"* (Rev. 12:11).

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